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Assistance in mine action

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Assistance in mine action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/7 of 19 October 1993, 49/215 of 23 December 1994, 50/82 of 14 December 1995, 51/149 of 13 December 1996 and 52/173 of 18 December 1997, on assistance in mine clearance, and its resolutions 53/26 of 17 November 1998, 54/191 of 17 December 1999, 55/120 of 6 December 2000 and 56/219 of 21 December 2001 on assistance in mine action, all adopted without a vote,

Recognizing that, in addition to the primary role of States, the United Nations has a significant role to play in the field of assistance in mine action, and considering mine action to be an important and integrated component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities,

Reaffirming its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian and development problems caused by the presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance that constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, to humanitarian aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normal social conditions, and that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-affected countries,

Bearing in mind the serious threat that mines and other unexploded ordnance pose to the safety, health and lives of local civilian populations, as well as of

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personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations,

Encouraged by the reduction in the number of new mine victims, but reiterating its dismay at the existing high number of victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance, especially among civilian populations, including women and children, and recalling in this context Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1995/79 of 8 March 1995,[1] 1996/85 of 24 April 1996,[2] 1997/78 of 18 April 1997,[3] 1998/76 of 22 April 1998,[4] 1999/80 of 28 April 1999,[5] 2000/85 of 27 April 2000,[6] 2001/75 of 25 April 2001[7] and 2002/92 of 26 April 2002 on the rights of the child,[8] and resolutions 1996/27 of 19 April 1996,[2] 1998/31 of 17 April 1998,[4] 2000/51 of 25 April 2000,[6] 2002/61 of 25 April 2002[8] and decision 1997/107 of 11 April 1997,[3] on the human rights of persons with disabilities,

Deeply alarmed by the number of mines that continue to be laid each year, as well as the presence of a decreasing but still very large number of mines and other unexploded ordnance as a result of armed conflicts, and therefore remaining convinced of the necessity and urgency of a significant increase in mine-clearance efforts by the international community with a view to eliminating the threat of landmines to civilians as soon as possible,

Noting the inclusion in Amended Protocol II[9] to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects[10] of a number of provisions of importance for mine-clearance operations, notably the requirement of detectability, and provision of information and technical and material assistance necessary to remove or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines and booby traps, and noting also that Amended Protocol II to the Convention entered into force on 3 December 1998,

Noting also the conclusions and recommendations adopted at the Third Annual Conference of the States Parties to Amended Protocol II, held at Geneva on 10 December 2001,[11]

Recalling that the States parties at the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention decided to explore further the issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines, the effects of explosive remnants of wars and possible measures which could reduce the risk of casualties of civilian populations and humanitarian problems after conflicts,

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

[2] Ibid., *1996, Supplement No. 3* and corrigendum (E/1996/23 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

[3] Ibid., *1997, Supplement No. 3* (E/1997/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[4] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[5] Ibid., *1999, Supplement No. 3* (E/1999/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[6] Ibid., *2000, Supplement No. 3* and corrigendum (E/2000/23 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

[7] Ibid., *2001, Supplement No. 3* (E/2001/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[8] Ibid., *2002, Supplement No. 3* (E/2002/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[9] CCW/CONF.I/16 (Part I), annex B.

[10] See *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, vol. 5: 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.IX.4), appendix VII.

[11] See CCW/AP.II/CONF.2/1.

Noting that additional States have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,[12] which entered into force on 1 March 1999, bringing the total number of States that have formally accepted the obligations to one hundred and thirty,

Noting also the conclusions of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, held at Geneva from 16 to 20 September 2002, taking note of the reaffirmed commitments that were made, among other things, to intensify further the efforts in those areas most directly related to the core humanitarian objectives of the Convention, to provide assistance for mine clearance and rehabilitation, the social and economic reintegration of mine victims and mine-risk education programmes and to eradicate anti-personnel mines, and taking note of the work of the intersessional programme established by States parties to the Convention,

Stressing the need to convince mine-affected States to halt new deployments of anti-personnel mines in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of mine-clearance operations,

Stressing also the need to convince non-State actors to halt immediately and unconditionally new deployments of anti-personnel mines,

Recognizing the importance of assisting mine clearance in mine-affected countries by ensuring that the necessary maps and information and appropriate technical and material assistance are provided to help remove existing minefields, mines, booby traps and other unexploded ordnance,

Noting that the resources allocated to mine clearance and other mine-action activities have increased in recent years, but stressing the need to mobilize additional resources to meet increasing requirements, and encouraging all States, the United Nations and other international, regional and non-governmental organizations to continue their efforts in this regard,

Concerned about the limited availability of safe and cost-effective mine-detection and mine-clearance equipment, as well as the need for effective global coordination in research and development to improve the relevant technology, and conscious of the need to promote further and more rapid progress in this field and to foster international, national and local technical cooperation to that end,

Reaffirming the need to reinforce international and regional cooperation and coordination in the area of mine action and to devote the necessary resources to that end, including resources to support national and regional capacity-building initiatives, where applicable, and the work of the United Nations in that regard,

Welcoming the various established mine-action coordination centres, as well as the creation and existence of international trust funds for mine clearance and other mine-action activities,

Noting with satisfaction the inclusion in the mandates of several peacekeeping operations of provisions relating to mine-action work carried out under the direction of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in the context of such operations,

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[12] See CD/1478.

Commending the action taken by donor and recipient Governments, the United Nations system, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations to coordinate their efforts and seek solutions to the problems related to the presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance, as well as their assistance to victims of mines,

Welcoming the role of the Secretary-General in increasing public awareness of the problem of landmines,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action;[13]

2. *Calls*, in particular, for the continuation of the efforts of States, with the assistance of the United Nations and institutions as appropriate, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries in which mines constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local population or an impediment to social and economic development efforts at the national and local levels, and urges all Member States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, to assist mine-affected countries in the establishment and development of national capacities in mine clearance, mine awareness and victim assistance;

3. *Invites* Member States to develop and support national programmes, where appropriate in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system and relevant regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations, to promote awareness of landmines, including among women and children;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to Governments, regional organizations and other donors for their financial and in-kind contributions to mine action, including contributions for emergency operations and for national and local capacity-building programmes;

5. *Appeals* to Governments, regional organizations and other donors to continue, and whenever possible increase, their support to mine action through further contributions, including contributions through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, to allow for the timely delivery of mine-action assistance in emergency situations, and stresses that such assistance should be integrated into broader humanitarian and other strategies;

6. *Stresses* the importance of international support for emergency assistance to victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance and for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of the victims, and also stresses that such assistance should be integrated into broader public health and socio-economic strategies;

7. *Encourages* the finalization of an emergency response plan by the United Nations to respond to emergency mine-action requirements, and emphasizes the need for that plan to build upon all existing capacities;

8. *Encourages* all relevant multilateral and national programmes and bodies to include, in coordination with the United Nations, activities related to mine action in their humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance

[13] A/57/430.

activities, where appropriate, bearing in mind the need to ensure national and local ownership, sustainability and capacity-building;

9. *Encourages* Governments, relevant United Nations bodies and other donors to take further action to promote gender- and age-appropriate mine-risk education programmes, victim assistance and child-centred rehabilitation, thereby reducing the number of child victims and relieving their plight;

10. *Stresses* the importance of cooperation and coordination in mine action, while emphasizing once again the important role of the United Nations in the effective coordination of mine-action activities, based on the United Nations policy on mine action and effective coordination,[14] and especially the role of the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat, also stresses the important role that national authorities and regional organizations can play in this regard, and underlines the need for the continuous assessment of these roles by the General Assembly;

11. *Emphasizes* the role of the Mine Action Service as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system and its ongoing collaboration with and coordination of all mine-related activities of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and in this regard expresses its appreciation of the roles played by other bodies of the United Nations system, in accordance with United Nations mine-action policy;

12. *Notes with appreciation* the implementation of the United Nations mine-action strategy for the period 2001-2005[15] developed by the Secretary-General, and requests him to formally review it by further seeking and taking into account the views of Member States and taking into consideration the impact of the landmine problem on rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, in order to ensure the effectiveness of assistance in mine action by the United Nations;

13. *Emphasizes* the importance of undertaking further multisectoral assessments and surveys to better define the nature, scope and impact of the landmine problem in affected countries and to support the establishment of clear priorities and national plans of action, notes with appreciation the ongoing development by the United Nations of the International Mine Action Standards, with the assistance of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and other partners in mine action, to support the safe and effective conduct of mine-action activities, emphasizes the need for an inclusive process to be followed in the development and review of such standards, and encourages the Secretary-General to circulate the completed standards as a United Nations document to all Member States;

14. *Takes note with appreciation* of the information management policy for mine action presented by the Secretary-General,[16] and emphasizes in this context the importance of developing and maintaining a comprehensive information management system for mine action, following an inclusive and continuous improvement process, under the overall coordination of the Mine Action Service and with the instrumental support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian

[14] A/53/496, annex II.
[15] A/56/448.
[16] See A/56/448/Add.2.

Demining, in order to facilitate the coordination of field activities and the setting of priorities therein;

15. *Requests* the Mine Action Service to develop further the electronic mine information network as a user-friendly repository of mine-related information and as a means for mine-action programmes to circulate on a regular basis to donors and other partners standard reports on the scope and impact of the mine problem, available mine-action resources and capacities and the progress achieved in the field;

16. *Urges* Member States and regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to provide him with information and data, as well as other appropriate resources that could be useful in strengthening the coordination role of the United Nations in mine action;

17. *Emphasizes* in this regard the importance of recording the location of mines, of retaining all such records and making them available to concerned parties upon cessation of hostilities, and welcomes the strengthening of the relevant provisions in international law;

18. *Calls upon* Member States, especially those that have the capacity to do so, to provide the necessary information and technical, financial and material assistance, as appropriate, and to locate, remove, destroy or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby traps and other devices in accordance with international law, as soon as possible;

19. *Recognizing* the importance of the various mine-action coordination centres, encourages the further establishment of such centres, including those supported by the United Nations Development Programme under the auspices of the Mine Action Service, especially in emergency situations, and encourages States to support the activities of those centres and the trust funds established for the coordination and promotion of assistance in mine action;

20. *Urges* Member States and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations that have the ability to do so to provide, as appropriate, technological assistance to mine-affected countries and to promote user-oriented scientific research and development on mine-action techniques and technology, within reasonable time frames, so that mine-action activities may be carried out more effectively at lower costs and through safer means and to promote international and local collaboration in this regard;

21. *Encourages* Member States and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to support ongoing activities to promote appropriate technology, as well as international operational and safety standards for mine-action activities;

22. *Takes note with appreciation* of the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to study ways and means of increasing public awareness of the impact of the problem of landmines and other unexploded ordnance on affected countries and the presentation of options to this effect to the General Assembly;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the progress achieved on all relevant issues outlined both in his previous reports to the Assembly on assistance in mine clearance and

mine action and in the present resolution, including the progress made by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international and regional organizations as well as national programmes, and on the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and other mine-action programmes;

24. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-eighth session the item entitled "Assistance in mine action".